

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 CPR-02 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 SCA-01

DRC-01 /085 W

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R 191230Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3193

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD UNN

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FOR EUR/SOV

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UR CASC AFSP

SUBJECT: SOVIET CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF MARINE GUARDS

1. SUMMARY: IN SEPARATE INCIDENTS SEPTEMBER 21 AND OCTOBER 13, EMBASSY MARINE SECURITY GUARDS WERE SUBJECTED TO STRINGENT CUSTOMS INSPECTION AT SHEREMETYEVO AIRPORT MOSCOW. MARINES BORE OFFICIAL PASSPORTS WITH OFFICIAL (SLUZHEBNAYA) SOVIET VISAS. EMBASSY PLANS TO CALL MFA'S ATTENTION TO INCIDENTS AND STRESS THAT USG WILL EXACT RECIPROCITY IF INCIDENTS REOCCUR. DEPARTMENT IS REQUESTED TO MAKE SAME POINT TO SOVIET EMBASSY. END SUMMARY.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 21, GUNNERY SERGEANT JERRY POLK, HEAD OF EMBASSY MOSCOW MARINE DETACHMENT, WAS ASKED TO SHOW WALLET BY SHEREMETYEVO CUSTOMS WHILE LEAVING SOVIET UNION FOR PERMANENT ONWARD ASSIGNMENT. CUSTOMS OFFICIAL TOOK WALLET, REMOVED MONEY AND COUNTED IT, THEN PROCEEDED TO EXAMINE THOROUGHLY ALL OF POLK'S SUITCASES. NOTHING WAS CONFISCATED. POLK AND ACCOMPANYING EMBASSY SECURITY OFFICER ORALLY COMPLAINED ABOUT INSPECTION WHICH LASTED ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES. POLK

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DID NOT HAVE OFFICIAL SOVIET ID WITH HIM SINCE HE HAD TURNED

IT IN TO EMBASSY PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE.

3. ON OCTOBER, MARINE CPL WALTER DURLING WAS KEPT WAITING OVER THREE HOURS FOR CUSTOMS INSPECTION ON ARRIVING AT SHEREMETYEVO AT 1500 ON PAN AM FLIGHT 102, AND THEN SUBJECTED TO SEARCHING INSPECTION. ALTHOUGH OTHER AMERICANS WERE FINALLY PERMITTED TO PROCEED, DURLING MADE SEVERAL FRUITLESS ATTEMPTS TO ACCELERATE PROCEDURE BY SHOWING CUSTOMS OFFICIALS OFFICIAL PASSPORT AND SOVIET OFFICIAL ID CARD. HE WAS EXAMINED LAST.

4. TWO SOVIET OFFICIALS TOOK DURLING'S ELECTRIC RAZOR AND CAMERA FLASH ATTACHMENT APART, PARTLY UNWRAPPED GIFT, SLIT OPEN FOUR SEALED NEW RECORD ALBUMS DURING CLOSE FIFTEEN MINUTE INSPECTION OF HIS SUITCASE, BRIEFCASE, HANDBAG AND BOX. NOTHING WAS CONFISCATED. DURLING SAID OFFICIALS WERE IN PLAINCLOTHES, BUT THEY ALSO INSPECTED OTHER PASSENGERS.

5. EMBASSY NOTES THAT 1967 SOVIET NOTE ACCORDING DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES TO AMCIT MEMBERS EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE-TECHNICAL STAFF EXPRESSLY WITHHELD FULL CUSTOMS PRIVILEGES. AT SAME TIME HOWEVER, BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE MADE CLEAR PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY GOVERNS CUSTOMS TREATMENT RESPECTIVE EMBASSY PERSONNEL. SOVIET OFFICIAL (SLUZHEBNAYA) ID CARDS ISSUED EMBASSY MARINES BEAR STANDARD STAMPED-IN LANGUAGE GRANTING DIPLOMATIC PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES ON BASIS RECIPROCITY.

6. ALTHOUGH SOVIET CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS OF POLK AND DURLING VIOLATE NO FORMAL BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING, THEY DO CRUELY OFFEND PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY. EMBASSY PLANS TO CALL MFA ATTENTION TO BOTH INCIDENTS AND TO NOTE THAT CLOSE AND DILATORY CUSTOMS EXAMINATION OF EMBASSY PERSONNEL WILL ONLY INVITE RECIPROCAL TREATMENT IN NYC OR WASHINGTON.

7. DEPARTMENT REQUESTED TO MAKE SAME POINT TO SOVIET EMBASSY AT FIRST APPROPRIATE OCCASION. EMBASSY SUGGESTS WE AWAIT SOVIET RESPONSES BEFORE WE DECIDE WHETHER TO EXACT RECIPROCITY. EMBASSY WILL MAKE CLEAR TO MFA, HOWEVER, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT OFFICIAL RESPONSE IS EXPECTED.
EXEMPT
DUBS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973MOSCOW13036
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731021/aaaaapnt.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 FEB 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01-Feb-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <20 FEB 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF MARINE GUARDS
TAGS: CASC, AFSP, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005